

# Bishop Rawstorne CE Academy



The themes for this half term's newsletter are:

Literacy - speaking and listening and reading ideas  
 Numeracy – this year's new initiatives  
 Differentiation – seatings and groupings  
 Student Blog – what's happening in and out of school  
 SMSC – how can we do more?  
 GCSE Pod – a new technology to aid learning



Good oral communication is essential to every aspect of life and work. Many surveys have identified it as one of the skills most highly valued by employers.

## Boys vs Girls

It's widely agreed that girls generally start talking earlier than boys, and use more complex vocabulary. When they start school, most girls have slightly better verbal skills than boys - on average, they are a month or two ahead.

On the whole, girls are more likely to be talkative, self-motivated and able to empathise with others – and more likely to have better verbal skills, which help them with reading and writing.

Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to be impulsive, competitive and less able to empathise with others. However, they tend to develop superior spatial skills which help with maths and science.

As they progress through primary school, girls continue to outperform boys when it comes to verbal skills. By the time children leave primary school, girls are about a year ahead with reading and the gap is even bigger for writing. (BBC Learning Parents)

So... what can we do to even the score with oral skills?

## Top Tips

Teamwork helps – but ensure everyone has a chance to contribute by using strategies such as talking chips, random reporter or teach turn taking with the partner A and B idea with thirty seconds each to speak.

Line – up – get students to face each other in a line then one side of the class gets to talk for 20 seconds about a topic whilst the other listens then responds, then vice versa. One student can go to the end of the line to create a new partner for everyone!

Model good speaking and listening – remind students of the skills you are looking for in a good speaker and listener: **body language, facial expression, eye contact, gestures, tone, clarity, pace, volume, grammar.**

Ask students who are working well to talk through what they are doing, how and why. Ask students to reflect on how they work together.

Give students thinking time before asking them to respond – let them clarify their thoughts and what they want to say.

Use no hands up questioning – all students realise that they have to listen and may be asked to contribute. And if they say they don't know – bounce the question around and then come back to them for an opinion. Try **POSE, PAUSE, POUNCE, BOUNCE** to get the questioning moving around the class and deepen learning.

Enable students to read aloud to each other whenever possible. They can practise listening skills by summarising what has been said to them.

Give them something real or controversial to talk about – throw in a problem, play devil's advocate and fire them up! Arrange them in teams or pairs that enable equal accountability and confidence.

Time their talk so that they learn to fill the space.

## What's happening about reading this half term?

Fact – research shows that free voluntary reading results in superior general knowledge; improves spelling, writing and grammar; results in better reading comprehension, writing style and increased vocabulary and better results. So what can we do to entice our students to read?

One tutor period each week will be dedicated to reading in a range of ways. September will see the launch of 'Fantasy Football Read', kicking off with Year 7 forms initially and operating on a points based system- students earn 'goals' depending on the reading they do as a tutor group that week- the more active the reading in tutor time (e.g. reading aloud to each other, someone doing a talk/presentation on a class must-read followed by a Q&A) the more goals they score for their tutor group. The winning tutor group will get exclusive access to the football trophy and mascot for that half term. The rules sheet and A3 laminated goals chart will land in the nets of year 7 tutors on the first full teaching week back.



### Leading Readers – Jackanory Style

This year, colleagues in leadership positions will be asked to link with a year group and every week will be coming into a different tutor to read a short story or non-fiction piece that will hopefully capture the interest of the students. Feel free to give the leadership some top tips on their reading skills! We're starting off this term a

Year 7 – Mrs Harrison

Year 8 – Mrs Lane

Year 9 – Mr Almond

Year 10 – Mr Cowley

Year 11 – Mr Rawlinson



To encourage reading with your classes, make books visible and talk about books. Have a book swap station – make it colourful and offer a range of genres and text types. Survey your students about their reading interests – what do they like? Have a book review board and make sure students hear you enthuse about the books you have read.

And finally... ask the students what you can do to make reading more exciting!

## Numeracy - the bugs are back and other news

After a summer sojourn the number bugs are back!

Students can once again nominate teachers who can demonstrate numeracy in their lessons through the forms available outside M5.

The student will receive 3 points, and the teacher a hand-delivered number bug demonstrating their numerical expertise. Cassie Grimes, Ben Needham and Tracy Swindells proved to be the number masters last year, however we now start the new school year with a clean slate. Who will be the Numeracy Champion 2014/2015? Over to you!

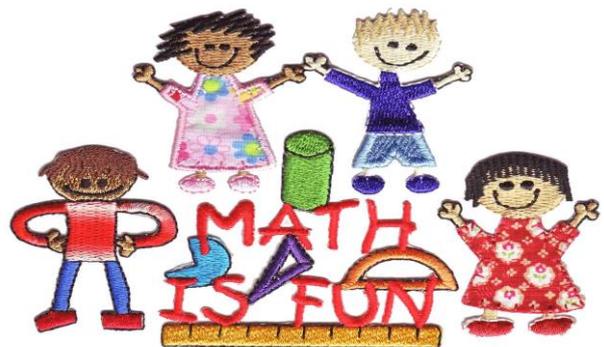


The first of six half termly numeracy quizzes will be circulated later this week, and as was the case last year, the winning tutor from each year group will receive a certificate and the pupils a prize. Tutors – please look out for them on your e-mail.

Year 7 tutors will be receiving a 'numeracy box' this half-term which will contain problem-solving resources. Students can earn points for themselves and rewards for their tutor group through completion of the tasks – more details to follow.....

Keep an eye and ear out for another new numeracy Initiative for this year which we are calling **Game Club**. This will be coming to the Maths department soon. If it is a game, and it involves numeracy, we will be trying to get our hands on it so students can enjoy an alternative lunch-time. Featuring guest appearances from the Maths department, the only rule about Game Club is.....well, you know.

Finally, I will be putting together a number of numeracy resources and giving everyone access to them in one fell swoop this year – as opposed to providing bite size half-termly themes. This way everyone will be able to access examples and methods of key skills as and when they need them.



### Differentiation Matters

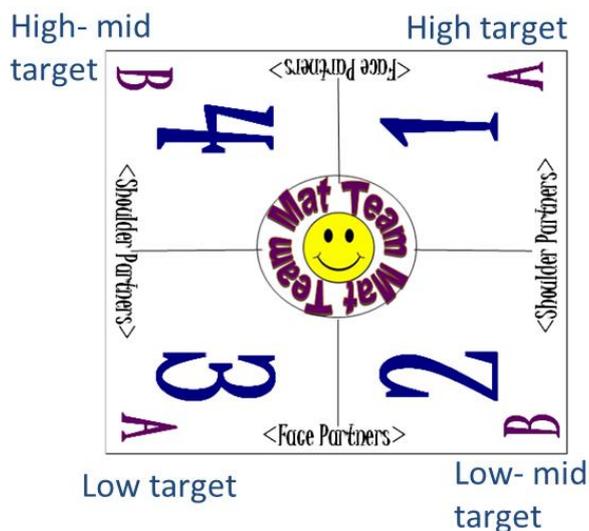
How deeply have you thought about the most effective seating plans and groupings for your new classes?

It is now widely accepted that students work more collaboratively when desks are arranged in groups rather than in rows. So, what is the most productive team size?

Dr. Spencer Kagan argues that 4 is the magic number. Four team members means that if a question is posed for group discussion, 25% of the class will be articulating their ideas at any one time. The number 4 also allows for diverse pairwork by using face partners and shoulder partners.

We can also go even deeper into how students are arranged into these groups of 4 increasing classroom differentiation.

Number students 1- 4 and their number should relate to their end of year target or most recent assessment (see diagram below which can be put on each desk).



Most teachers are often good at creating a seating plan that they become very comfortable with but do our students then get too comfortable with working with the same people for the whole year? These numbers allow new strategic pairings to be set up with students from opposite sides of the classroom. 4s can be asked to find a number 2 and 1s to find a 3. These pairings lead to high-low and high mid-low mid partners and 1s and 4s can be asked to lead the discussion as the more able student within the pairing.

Students must know their number but not what these numbers actually relate to. This allows you to know exactly where all the high achievers in your class are sitting. If a particularly difficult task is set you could ask students to sit in groups of the same numbers, e.g. all the 4s together. This allows you to

spend more of time with the lower ability or a classroom assistant could assist with this group. Even without students moving, the number 1s could be told to start further down the page in a text book as they are the more able students in the group.

### Student Blog

This term will see the launch of our very own student blog on the school website. The blog will be written by a team of students who will be visiting different subject areas to find out what's going on in and around school. They will be reporting on competitions, trips and a variety of extra-curricular activities so please email [CThompson@BishopR.co.uk](mailto:CThompson@BishopR.co.uk) Carol Thompson or [10LHurst@BishopR.co.uk](mailto:10LHurst@BishopR.co.uk) Luke Hurst if you would like a visit from one of our roving reporters.



One only has to walk along the corridor and watch how our young people behave and treat each other with respect and care to realise our school oozes SMSC but are we missing opportunities in the classroom to further explore aspects of a social, moral, spiritual and cultural nature?

Allowing time for students to reflect and discuss a picture, photo or a well known quote may spark some deeper understanding of the world around them. Teaching a topic and relating it to a current issue will also help them put their learning into perspective.

Moral issues can be highlighted via work on finance, stem cell technology, local, national and international events, impact of new technologies, how we can feed the world, intensive farming, and pollution etc.

Try to present opportunities that offer pupils a chance to develop teamwork and leadership skills. Offer the pupils a chance to recognise the differences between right and wrong, and how this could be applied to their own lives - this could then be extended to holding debates and discussion leading to written work. This should not take over your lesson but could add another dimension to young people's learning.



“GCSE Pod is a unique service, designed to tap into the learning potential of smart phones and handheld devices through a combination of clever technology and award-winning content, to ensure equality of access, high usage and the best possible impact on GCSE results”. ([www.gcsepod.com](http://www.gcsepod.com))

We say that it is an exciting way for students to learn. It empowers students to use their mobile devices to revise for exams or learn something new when on the move or at home. It is like carrying all their revision text books in one small mobile device.

Assignments can be easily generated, shared and sent to students for homework or classwork to show understanding. These can be free text (any amount of text for the answer) or multiple choice and can be automatically marked with the results appearing in your teacher area on the website.

We are particularly interested in using GCSE Pod to target under-performing students with extra revision in the areas they most need it.

For more information see [Barbi Webber in M7](#).

## CPD and Teaching and Learning Programme

Click [here](#) to find out what training sessions are on this year, both in school and across the alliance.

### For general updates on what is going on in education try looking at:

[Othmar'strombone.wordpress.com](http://Othmar'strombone.wordpress.com)

[Headguruteacher.com](http://Headguruteacher.com)

[@headguruteacher](https://twitter.com/headguruteacher)

[@TeacherToolkit](https://twitter.com/TeacherToolkit)

[David Didau@Learning Spy](mailto:David.Didau@LearningSpy)

[behaviourguru.blogspot.uk](http://behaviourguru.blogspot.uk)

[@edutopia](#) – resources and tools for teachers

[@HuntingEnglish](https://twitter.com/HuntingEnglish)

[@TeachingIdeas](https://twitter.com/TeachingIdeas)

[@Ofstednews](https://twitter.com/Ofstednews)

[bestevidence.org.uk](http://bestevidence.org.uk) - reviews of research-proven educational programmes for primary and secondary education

[york.ac.uk](http://york.ac.uk) – The Institute of Effective Education – research on what works in teaching and learning

For additions to future newsletters, please email. [clane@bishopr.co.uk](mailto:clane@bishopr.co.uk)

